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position which they occupy. A great newspaper, every newspaper in fact, is something more than a private business enterprise. It is a quasi-public institution. The interests of the public are so connected with it and so affected by its conduct that that portion of the public on whom rests the responsibility of social and political order has a right to say something of the manner in which it shall be managed. If every man is under moral obligation to conduct his vocation with a view to the ultimate good of the public, the newspaper man is under double obligation to do so.

Report of the Maine Court of Inquiry.

The report of the court of inquiry appointed to investigate the causes of the destruction of the battleship Maine has been awaited with anxiety. The report, which is now in, makes it certain, if it was not already certain, that this great calamity is not to lead to the still greater calamity of war. The court's findings are different from what many had supposed they would be. The accident theory, put forth at first by the government and held by many to the last, has been set aside by the report. There is, however, in the court's findings nothing of the sensational character which newspaper rumors right at the last predicted there would be. Spain and the Spaniards are not even mentioned in connection with the question of responsibility. The document is a short, cool, business-like one, and is allowed to speak for itself.

After describing the condition of the ship on the evening of the disaster, the nature of the two explosions which are found to have occurred, and the condition and position of the wreck as determined by the divers — which latter is set forth with great carefulness of detail — the court sums up its conclusions in three short statements:

"The court finds that the loss of the Maine, on the occasion named, was not in any respect due to the fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of the crew of said vessel.

"In the opinion of the court the Maine was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines.

"The court has been unable to obtain evidence fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons."

While the report does not locate the responsibility;

there are parts of it which raise a strong suspicion of a Spanish origin of the disaster. Very few thinking people have ever believed that the Spanish government or the officials at Havana were directly guilty of blowing up the ship. Many have believed, from the general circumstances of the disaster, that it was caused by individual Spaniards acting of their own motion. This belief will not be at all lessened but rather much increased by the report.

The President, in a short, admirable message, has communicated the report to Congress. It has been referred to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and is not likely to be acted on in any way until the President gets word from the government at Madrid. In reference to what the Spanish government may be expected to do, the President says to Congress: "I have directed that the finding of the court of inquiry and the views of this government thereon be communicated to the government of her majesty, the Queen regent, and I do not permit myself to doubt that the sense of justice of the Spanish nation will dictate a course of action suggested by honor and the friendly relations of the two governments."

Such utterances as this, supposing as we do that the President has used as wise, kindly and trustful language in his communication to the Spanish government, will go a long way toward securing an immediate response answering the President's expectations. The court of inquiry and the President have certainly shown a most wise and magnanimous spirit in treating the subject. There is not a syllable in their utterances to arouse Spanish irritation.

It is possible that the Spanish government may place the report of its own court of inquiry over against that of ours and ask that the whole subject be reviewed by an international tribunal. This report holds that the ship was destroyed wholly from within. If this course should be taken by Spain, the question of responsibility will certainly go at last to a court of arbitration. If the Spanish government should take this course and ask for arbitration, our government could not in justice, and certainly would not, refuse. It is a matter eminently suitable in every way for arbitration. Spain has a right to clear herself of all responsibility for the dreadful catastrophe, if she can do it. There is reason to hope that the Spanish government will be induced by our government's self-restraint and kindness to either acknowledge responsibility in a general way, or to offer, in

a spirit of friendship and conciliation, to make reparation without acknowledging responsibility, as our government did in the case of the Italians killed at New Orleans. After this report of the court of inquiry all talk of war over the destruction of the Maine is un-American and ought to cease.

The Struggle for Peace.

It is not the Maine disaster in itself which threatens to lead to war, though the peril of the general situation has been greatly intensified thereby. For three weeks past it has seemed as if the country were driving straight into the yawning abyss. The feeling in favor of armed intervention, ostensibly to stop the inhumanities in Cuba, was blown into a white heat by the destruction of the Maine. It has been restless and aggressive in Congress and out of it. This feeling has been further intensified by the speeches of the Senators who have visited Cuba and seen the desolations there. The voting of the fifty millions emergency fund, which it was thought would quiet the aggressive men, has had the opposite effect. The extensive war preparations which have followed have deepened the determination of these men to accomplish their purpose of immediate armed intervention for the independence of Cuba.

The problem which the President has set for himself is, therefore, under the circumstances, an extremely difficult one. He has undertaken to secure the cessation of the Cuban war, the permanent relief of the sufferers, self-government for Cuba, and to accomplish this without involving the country in war with Spain. He has, up to this writing, pursued this aim with unfaltering faith and devotion. He has not been moved by the sensational papers. He has kept in hand, with admirable tact, the aggressive men in Congress. His diplomatic methods have shown the highest order of Christian statesmanship. He has had the support of the Cabinet, and of the strongest and best men in both the Senate and the House. He has had the increasing sympathy and support of all the best elements of the nation. Even that class of our best citizens who, while deploring war, believe that the United States ought to intervene by force to stop the dreadful inhumanities in Cuba, have supported the President and been willing to leave him a free hand and plenty of time to demonstrate what his policy can do.

There is now strong hope that he will succeed in

this brave struggle to keep the peace while doing what he believes to be his duty towards Cuba. As we go to press, the reports from Spain are favorable. The Spanish ministry, sustained in the recent elections by a large majority, is reported to be ready to make proposals to our government of such a liberal nature as will entirely satisfy our government and be acceptable to the Cubans. We hope the President may be able to restrain Congress from declaring war, and continue his wise pacific policy. If tried long enough, it will certainly succeed. There is power in pacific methods of which men have little dreamed.

The efforts of the violent men in Congress, who are bent on war at all hazards, who have gone mad at the very wisdom of the President's message on the Maine disaster, ought signally to fail. There is certainly good sense and conservatism enough still in the Senate to kill their war resolutions. No greater national madness could be conceived of than a declaration of war against Spain, after these months of patient negotiation, contrary to the President's wishes and at the very moment when his policy seems about to be crowned with victory. In such a case, we should deserve the just judgments of Almighty God and the contempt of all the civilized world for our weakness and childish loss of self-control.

If the President's policy fails, and we involve ourselves in hostilities with Spain, it will be difficult enough, from any point of view, to justify armed intervention either for Cuban independence or the arrest of Spanish inhumanities. We shall have abandoned our historic policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. We shall have discarded all the rules of international law which govern the relations of civilized nations. We shall have supported against their home-government a body of insurgents about whose character there is no agreement among ourselves. We shall have substituted for inhumanities which we do not approve others awful to contemplate, of possibly much greater proportions and duration, which will have been brought on by our own voluntary act. We shall have deranged our whole commercial and industrial systems and brought on thereby an amount of suffering and distress impossible to estimate. We shall have taken a step leading straight to a policy of meddlesomeness, whose mischievous consequences can only be conjectured from the dire results of such